

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSM-03 IO-13 EUR-12 OMB-01 TRSE-00
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /085 W
-----241612 028713 /46

R 241436Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5007
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, IS
SUBJECT: RABIN-PERES POSTMORTEM

REF: TEL AVIV 1311

1. RABIN'S THIN MARGIN OF VICTORY HAS VINDICATED THE PRE-VOTE VIEW THAT THE RACE WOULD BE TOO CLOSE TO CALL. IN THE INEVITABLE POSTMORTEM, PERES SUPPORTERS WERE ASKING THEMSELVES WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN DONE DIFFERENTLY. SOME ARE SAYING THAT PERES PEAKED A BIT TOO EARLY AND THAT RABIN WAS GAINING IN THE FINAL DAYS BEFORE THE CONVENTION. OTHERS, NOTING THAT A SWITCH OF A MERE 21 VOTES COULD HAVE GIVEN THE VICTORY TO PERES, WONDER WHETHER THE CANDIDATES' FINAL SPEECHES HAD ANY INFLUENCE ON THE DELEGATES.

2. IN THE PRE-CONVENTION PLANNING GREAT IMPORTANCE WAS ATTACHED TO THE SPEECHES RABIN AND PERES WOULD EACH MAKE JUST PRIOR TO THE BALLOTING. THEIR ADDRESSES WERE SCHEDULED FOR 5 P.M. WITH THE VOTING TO BEGIN AT 7 P.M. EACH WAS
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ALLOTTED AN HOUR TO MAKE HIS FINAL APPEAL. THE ORDER OF THE SPEECHES WAS HOTLY CONTESTED RIGHT UP UNTIL THE FINAL HOUR, WITH EACH SIDE WANTING TO SPEAK LAST. UNABLE TO DECIDE, THE CONVENTION LEADERSHIP SUGGESTED A ROLL OF THE DICE, AND REPORTEDLY PERES' REPRESENTATIVE THREW AN 8 TO RABIN'S 6.

3. THE SPEECHES WERE LATE GETTING STARTED AND RABIN SPOKE FOR ONLY 20 MINUTES IN A STRAIGHTFORWARD APPEAL FOR SUPPORT. IN OUTLINING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF HIS GOVERNMENT HE COVERED SOME OF THE SAME GROUND CONTAINED IN HIS OPENING NIGHT ADDRESS (TEL AVIV 1292). HE DWELT ON HIS ARMY SERVICE AND EXPERIENCE IN COMMAND, MAKING IMPLICIT THE CONTRAST WITH PERES' LACK OF A MILITARY RECORD. HE PROMISED NEW FACES IN GOVERNMENT ALONGSIDE FAMILIAR VETERAN PERSONALITIES, NOTED MAPAM'S THREAT TO BOLT THE ALIGNMENT IF PERES IS NOMINATED, AND CLAIMED THAT TURNING HIM OUT WOULD BE READ AS A REPUDIATION OF THE ALIGNMENT-LED GOVERNMENT AND ITS POLICIES, SINCE HIS TENURE OF 33 MONTHS IS TOO SHORT A TERM FOR A ROUTINE CHANGE OF LEADERSHIP.

4. IN HIS HOUR -LONG ADDRESS PERES TOOK THE HIGH ROAD, DESCRIBING THE CONVENTION ATMOSPHERE AS ONE OF UNITY AND RECOUNTING ISRAEL'S ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE STATEHOOD UNDER LABOR-LED GOVERNMENTS. WHEN A MURMUR AMONG THE DELEGATES FOLLOWED HIS RECITAL OF THE IDF'S GROWTH SINCE THE YOM KIPPUR WAR, PERES WAS QUICK TO DISCLAIM PERSONAL CREDIT FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT. HE REPEATED LABOR'S WELL-KNOWN VIEWS ON A SETTLEMENT WITH ISRAEL'S NEIGHBORS, INDICATING THAT HIS POSITION WAS IN THE MAINSTREAM OF THE PARTY'S VIEWS. HE THEN WENT INTO ISRAEL'S PROBLEMS AND SHORT-COMINGS, PARTICULARLY IN THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SPHERES, HE SAID THE CENTRAL ISSUES IN THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN WILL BE INTERNAL PROBLEMS AND ECONOMIC GROWTH. REFERRING TO THE COMPETITION OF THE DMC AND THE LIKUD, HE ARGUED EITHER WE CHANGE "FROM WITHIN" OR CHANGE WILL BE FORCED UPON US LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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"FROM WITHOUT."

5. IN RETROSPECT, SOME OBSERVERS ARE SAYING THAT PERES' SPEECH, WHILE ADEQUATE, WAS DISAPPOINTING AND FAILED TO STIR WAVERERS. HE HAD THE HANDICAP OF BEING REGARDED AS MUCH THE BETTER SPEAKER OF THE TWO. ALTHOUGH HE SPOKE WELL, HIS ADDRESS CONTAINED TOO MANY PLATITUDES AND WAS OVERLY LONG--PARTICULARLY ANNOYING IN THE HOT AND POORLY VENTILATED AUDITORIUM. BY CONTRAST, RABIN'S SPEECH WAS TYPICALLY UNINSPIRING BUT AT LEAST MERCIFULLY SHORT.

6. IN A BRIEF VICTORY PRESS CONFERENCE LAST NIGHT, RABIN CALLED PERES AN "OUTSTANDING LEADER" AND DECLARED THAT HE WOULD OCCUPY AN IMPORTANT POST IN RABIN'S NEXT CABINET. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER THIS IS THE BEGINNING OF A GENUINE CLOSING OF RANKS IN LABOR'S UP-HILL STRUGGLE TO MAINTAIN ITS HEGEMONY AFTER THE MAY 17 ELECTION. DUNNIGAN

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Message Attributes

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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 24-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
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